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1975/04/18

Department of State TELEGRAM

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, VS

SUBJECT: VIET-NAM EVACUATION

1. WE HAD A VERY SOBER ITERAGENCY MEETING TODAY TO REVIEW THE STATE OF OUR PLANNING ON THE EVACUATION OF AMERICANS AND VIETNAMESE IN LIGHT OF THE DETERIORATING SITUATION.

2. THERE IS STRONG DOMESTIC AND CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN THAT WE MUST PUT A HIGHER PRIORITY ON INSURING THE SAFETY OF AMERICANS IN VIET-NAM. THIS REQUIRES AN ACCELERATED DEPARTURE SCHEDULE AND DETAILED PLANS WHICH MATCH OUR POTENTIAL NEEDS TO OUR ASSETS AND

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IDENTIFIES OUR REQUIREMENTS AS PRECISELY AS POSSIBLE. WE WISH YOU TO GIVE US YOUR CONTINUOUS EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR RESPONSIBILITIES. IN DOING SO, YOU SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE STRONG CONGRESSIONAL RESERVATIONS ABOUT FURTHER AID AND THE PRESIDENT'S DETERMINATION TO FULFILL HIS OBLIGATIONS FOR THE SAFETY OF AMERICANS AS WELL AS FOR THE PROTECTION OF VIETNAMESE WHO HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH US.

3. THE ACCELERATED DEPARTURE OF AMERICANS SHOULD NOT

JUST INCLUDE OFFICIAL PERSONNEL BUT ALSO SUCH NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS AS CAN BE INFLUENCED TO LEAVE. WE MUST BE AT OR BELOW THE LEVEL OF 2,000 BY TUESDAY, APRIL 22 FOR ALL AMERICANS IN VIET-NAM. ANY ASSETS THAT YOU NEED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS TASK WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE. AIRCRAFT LEAVING SAIGON SHOULD NOT HAVE EMPTY SEATS. YOU SHOULD BEGIN TO USE THE PANAM 707 ON CALL AT GUAM AS A SHUTTLE BETWEEN CLARK AND SAIGON. WE WILL TALK TO PANAM ABOUT GETTING TO A DAILY SCHEDULE, IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO. YOU SHOULD ALSO SEEK TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF ANY OPPORTUNITY TO USE MSC SHIPS THAT ARE IN SAIGON AND NOW SCHEDULEDTO LEAVE IN THE NEXT 48 HOURS TO EVACUATE U.S. CITIZENS IF THIS WILL HELP TO MEET TARGETS.

4. I WOULD APPRECIATE MORE DETAILS OF WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND FOR EVACUATION OF VIETNAMESE. IS IT REALISTIC TO BELIEVE THAT VUNG TAU CAN BE USED FOR MASS EVACUATION? DO YOU BELIEVE THAT CERTAIN SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES COULD BE COUNTED ON TO HELP SECURE EVACUATION ZONES FOR MASS EVACUATION?

5. PLANS FOR VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR EVACUATING VIETNAMESE NEED TO BE REFINED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BASICALLY, THE QUESTION IS HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM, HOW TO ASSEMBLE THEM, HOW TO PROTECT THEM AND HOW TO TRANSPORT THEM. I BELIEVE THE ONLY WAY WE CAN DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK FOR CONSIDERING VIETNAMESE EVACUATION IS TO BEGIN TO DISCUSS SOME OF THESE CONTINGENCIES WITH

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PRESIDENT THIEU. IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO WORK CLOSELY WITH HIM IF WE ARE TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF AVOIDING A CHAOTIC SITUATION BROUGHT ABOUT BY OUR OWN MOVES. YOU MAY, AT YOUR DISCRETION, DISCUSS WITH HIM THE OPTIONS YOU HAVE PRESENTED TO US AND SEEK HIS VIEWS. HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO PROCEED IN A SPIRIT OF PANIC. HOWEVER, WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO FACE THE TRUE SITUATION AND BEGIN TO DECIDE UPON THE CHOICES AVAILABLE TO US.

6. WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF VIETNAMESE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH US, INCLUDING OUR EMPLOYEES, AND RELATIVES OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AND RESIDENT ALIENS. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER THIEU IS PREPARED TO ALLOW SOME OF THEM TO LEAVE NOW, BY BROADENING THE CATEGORIES OF VIETNAMESE CITIZENS EXEMPTED FROM THE VIETNAMESE TRAVEL BAN.

7. WE NEED YOUR RESPONSE BY OPENING OF BUSINESS HERE ON FRIDAY, IF POSSIBLE, BUT IN ANY EVENT NO LATER THAN COB FRIDAY. KISSINGER

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